

**REMARKS**

By this amendment, claims 1-3, 5-20, and 22-29 are pending, in which claims 4 and 21 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and claims 1, 8, 10, 13, 18, and 27 are currently amended. No new matter is introduced.

The final Office Action mailed October 2, 2003 rejected claims 1-29 as obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103 based on *Simeonidou et al.* (US 6,249,620) in view of commonly-assigned *Liu* (US 5,914,798).

To advance prosecution, Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 10, 18, and 27 to recite features present in dependent claims 4 and 21 (both now canceled), as well as to further define the claimed “binary interface.” Namely, claims 1 and 18 recite “selectively receiving alarm signals from at least one of the first line terminating equipment and the second line terminating equipment via a respective one of binary alarm interfaces coupling the first line terminating equipment and the second line terminating equipment, each of the binary alarm interfaces directly providing alarm and status condition information represented by the alarm signals without embedding the alarm and status condition information in traffic-bearing signals.” Amended claim 10 recites “a binary alarm interface coupled to the line terminating equipment, the binary alarm interface directly providing alarm and status condition information without embedding the alarm and status condition information in a traffic-bearing signal.” Claim 27 now includes the feature of “means for monitoring a plurality of physical connections between a first line terminating equipment and a second line terminating equipment of the submarine cable network, the monitoring means including binary interfaces coupled the first line terminating equipment and the second line terminating equipment, each of the binary alarm interfaces directly providing alarm and status condition information without embedding the alarm and status condition information in traffic-bearing signals.”

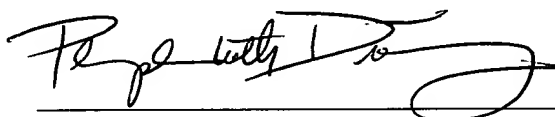
Per Applicant's arguments proffered in the Response dated December 2, 2003, the applied art is devoid of the above claim features, particularly as now amended. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the obviousness rejection.

Therefore, the present application, as amended, overcomes the rejection of record and is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration is respectfully requested. If any unresolved issues remain, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone the undersigned attorney at (703) 425-8508 so that such issues may be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

Respectfully Submitted,

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2/2/04  
Date



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